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SUBJECT: TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT (TIP) - ZIMBABWE

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11. (U) The following is Embassy Harare's response to questions posed to Post in reftels.

Zimbabwe's TIP Situation

-- 23 A. (SBU) There are no reliable statistics on the trafficking problem in Zimbabwe. Most information on trafficking comes from anecdotal reporting supplied by the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations (IOs) providing assistance to victims and vulnerable populations. One NGO reported helping 45 adolescent girls, most of whom were trafficked internally. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported assisting nine trafficking victims, three of whom were referred by the Zimbabwean police. IOM, in partnership with the Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) and UNICEF, conducted a study on child trafficking in Zimbabwe between November 2007 and February 2008 to gauge the scale of the problem and identify target areas for anti-trafficking programs. The draft report is currently being discussed by stakeholders before being distributed to the general public. IOM expects it will become public in the coming months. IOM also expected to complete a five-country (Zimbabwe, Zambia, Angola, Namibia, and Botswana) regional study on trafficking in July 2008. In October 2007, the Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare in collaboration with the International Labor Organization (ILO), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNICEF and IOM launched a multi-year program on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Zimbabwe. This program will address child labor issues and the implementation of ILO Convention 182, including identifying the worst forms of child labor in Zimbabwe and implementing activities pertaining to the prevention of child labor, protection of working children, rehabilitation of victims and income generating measures. The three above mentioned efforts remain incomplete as negotiations with the government over permits delayed the start dates. Political violence and instability in 2008 further delayed progress. As of February 2009, the projects remained incomplete.

-- 23 B. (SBU) Zimbabwe is a country of origin, transit, and destination for internationally trafficked men, women and children. Women and children are trafficked for labor and sexual exploitation along the borders with the four surrounding countries. There have been reports of Zimbabweans, especially young men and boys, providing labor for months in South Africa without pay before their employers report them to authorities for deportation. Many Zimbabweans suffering labor exploitation in surrounding countries do not report the offense to authorities out of fear of deportation. There have been reports of young women and girls being lured to the People's Republic of China, Egypt, the United Kingdom, and Canada under false pretenses for commercial sexual exploitation. Men, women, and children from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi,

Mozambique, and Zambia are trafficked through Zimbabwe en route to South Africa. A small number of South African girls are trafficked to Zimbabwe for forced domestic labor. Trafficking also occurs within the country's borders. NGOs believe internal trafficking increased during the year, largely due to the closure of schools, political violence, and a worsening economy. Young men and women and children in rural areas are trafficked to farms for agricultural labor and domestic servitude or to cities and towns for commercial sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. Although anecdotally it appears the situation worsened during the year, there is no quantitative data to confirm this.

-- 23 C. (SBU) Within Zimbabwe's borders, persons are trafficked to farms for agricultural labor, homes for domestic servitude, and - in some cases - for sexual exploitation. Women trafficked out of Zimbabwe for forced labor may be subjected to long working hours and abuse as well. Anecdotally, post is aware of other cases of men who have been trafficked into forced labor in construction and agriculture. These conditions may include long hours of forced labor for no pay, physical and sexual abuse. Adolescent boys and girls that are trafficked within Zimbabwe are often lured with the promise of education and are then forced to work.

-- 23 D. (SBU) Women and young girls are the most at-risk group for trafficking. The use of child labor, especially as farm workers or domestic servants, is common in Zimbabwe, often with the complicity of family members. During the reporting period, schools across the country, particularly in rural areas, were forced to close due to a combination of political violence, lack of teachers, and a lack of sanitary facilities at schools. In areas where schools did function, rising school fees often meant parents could not afford to send their children to school. In October, UNICEF announced that just a week before examinations were set to take place for primary, ordinary and advanced level, they found that an estimated 40 percent of the country's teachers were teaching and district education officers were ill equipped to run national exams. UNICEF reported in January 2009 that school enrollment had declined from approximately 85 percent in 2007 to just 20 percent in 2008. Girls were more likely than boys to drop out because they were more readily employable as domestic workers. Numerous reports from the press and NGOs indicated a rising number of Zimbabwean children entered South Africa illegally where they ended up as child labor working for little or no pay. In many cases, the children traded sex with guides or truck drivers to be smuggled across the border. The Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) reported that at least 35,000 Zimbabwean teachers had left the country in recent years to seek better opportunities and to flee political violence that targeted teachers. Many find employment as teachers in surrounding countries; however, others were forced into jobs on farms and in factories for little or no pay. There also have been reports of employers withholding their documentation under the pretext of regularizing their status. Zimbabweans often accept this abuse rather than report the offence to authorities and risk deportation.

-- 23 E. (SBU) According to anecdotal reports, cross-border traffickers are typically independent business people who are part of small networks of local criminal groups that facilitate trafficking within Zimbabwe, as well as into South Africa or other surrounding countries. In many cases, a trafficker approaches a potential victim with the offer of a lucrative job in another part of the country or in a neighboring country. Traffickers often transport victims covertly across borders at unrecognized border crossing points or bribe an immigration officer for entry. Many young men and boys are exploited by guides when they attempt to cross the border illegally into South Africa or another neighboring country to find work. There were numerous reports of guides leading Zimbabweans, including children, through the crocodile-infested Limpopo River into South Africa. Within Zimbabwe's borders, family members often entice children and other relatives to travel from rural to urban areas with the promise of a job or education. On arrival, the family member sometimes forces the victim into forced domestic or other labor. Some children, particularly orphans, have been lured to South Africa based on the promise of an education and adoption.

SETTING THE SCENE FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-TIP EFFORTS:

-- 24 A. (SBU) The government, including senior officials at law enforcement, immigration and social welfare agencies, acknowledges that trafficking is a problem in the country. Senior government officials frequently speak out publicly about the dangers of trafficking, illegal migration, prostitution and exploitative labor conditions.

-- 24 B. (SBU) The government established in 2006 an inter-ministerial taskforce on trafficking, which includes representatives from the Ministries of Home Affairs, Justice, Information, Parliamentarian Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare. Under the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Victim Friendly Unit (VFU) of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) deals with children's and sexual abuse cases, and has the lead on investigation and tracking of trafficking cases and the referral of victims to support services. The Interpol National Central Bureau (NCB) Zimbabwe office has a "Human Trafficking Desk" staffed by ZRP detectives who coordinate Zimbabwe's involvement in international trafficking investigations. The Department of Immigration (in the Ministry of Home Affairs) monitors borders and ports of entry for possible traffickers and victims. The Department of Social Welfare (in the Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare) also has several programs for vulnerable children. The Ministry of Information collaborates on awareness campaigns funded by NGOs and IOs.

-- 24 C. (SBU) In practice, a severe lack of financial resources and hyperinflationary conditions limit the government's ability to address the trafficking problem. Police lack the resources, including manpower and fuel, to properly investigate trafficking cases. A backlog of cases continued to overwhelm a judicial system in which pre-trial detainees can wait prolonged periods before receiving a hearing in court. In addition, overall corruption in law enforcement and the judiciary were serious problems, exacerbated by low wages. NGOs and some government officials believed victims refused to prosecute or report cases of trafficking because they feared their traffickers would bribe police or judges. The Department of Social Welfare lacks the necessary funding to properly assist victims; however, it routinely refers victims to NGOs and IOs for such services.

(SBU) According to Zimbabwean law, birth registry is a right. In practice, many Zimbabwean children do not have a valid citizenship document because of stringent requirements and long distances needed to travel even to local offices where birth registry is recorded if a child is not born in a hospital. Independent groups estimate as many as two million citizens - including children - may have been disenfranchised by a 2002 law revising the citizenship act, including those perceived to have opposition leanings, such as the more than 200,000 commercial farm workers from neighboring countries, and approximately 30,000 mostly white dual nationals. Constitutional Amendment 19, which became effective on February 13, 2009, relaxed citizenship requirements and is expected to facilitate birth registration.

-- 24 D. (SBU) The government does not have the resources to systematically monitor its anti-trafficking efforts and periodically make available, publicly or privately and directly or through regional/international organizations, assessments of its anti-trafficking efforts.

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF TRAFFICKERS

-- 25 A. (SBU) Zimbabwean law does not specifically prohibit trafficking. Trafficking-related crimes are currently addressed under other legislation, primarily the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act, the Immigration Act and the Labor Relations Amendment Act. These laws criminalize transporting people across the border for sex, corruption of children, and allowing children to reside in or to frequent a brothel, allowing children to consort with or be employed by prostitutes, and forgery of travel documents. In addition, the Criminal Law Act prohibits abduction and the pledging of a female. The constitution and labor law provide that no one may be held in slavery or servitude or be made to perform forced

or compulsory labor. Zimbabwean legal experts consider these laws sufficient to cover both internal and external forms of trafficking for sexual exploitation. Additionally, a victim can bring a civil suit against a trafficker under current law. The Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act provides for victim restitution and compensation. The government reported in 2007 that it had drafted comprehensive trafficking legislation; however, the draft has not been made available for review nor introduced in Parliament. After March 2008 elections, Parliament was not sworn in until August. The newly elected parliamentarians have not yet formed the committees that review and propose legislation.

-- 25 B. (SBU) In terms of sexual exploitation offenses, the Criminal Law Act provides for the following:

-- Procuring another person for unlawful sexual conduct, or to become a prostitute whether inside or outside Zimbabwe, or to leave his or her usual place of residence to become an inmate or frequent a brothel is punishable by a fine, a maximum imprisonment of two years (10 years if the person procured is under 16 years of age), or both.

-- Coercing or inducing another person to engage in unlawful sexual conduct with another person by threat or intimidation is punishable by a fine, a maximum imprisonment of five years, or both.

-- Detaining a person in a brothel or any other premises with the intention that the detained person should engage in unlawful sexual conduct is punishable by a fine, a maximum imprisonment of one year, or both.

-- Allowing a person under 16 years of age to knowingly enter an establishment for the purpose of engaging in unlawful sexual conduct is punishable by a fine, a maximum imprisonment of seven years, or both. If the person is below the age of 12, the act is punishable by a fine, a maximum imprisonment of 10 years, or both.

-- A parent allowing a child under 18 years of age to become a prostitute is punishable by a fine, a maximum imprisonment of 10 years, or both.

-- Living off or facilitating prostitution is punishable by a fine, a maximum imprisonment of two years, or both.

-- Solicitation of another person for prostitution is punishable by a fine, a maximum imprisonment of six months, or both.

-- Sexual intercourse or performing indecent acts with a person under 16 years of age is punishable by a fine, a maximum imprisonment of 10 years, or both.

-- Pledging a female person for a forced marriage or to compensate for the death of a relative, or any debt or obligation, is punishable by a fine, a maximum imprisonment of two years, or both. Any party to the marriage or arrangement may be charged as an accomplice.

-- Forgery of a public document or corruptly using a false document is punishable by a fine, a maximum imprisonment of 20 years, or both.

-- 25 C. (SBU) In terms of labor trafficking offenses, the Labor Relations Amendment Act provides for the following:

-- Failure of an employer to protect employees' right to fair labor standards (including to pay any employee a wage lower than a prescribed minimum, to require an employee to work more than the maximum hours permitted by law, or to require any employee to work under any conditions or situation which are below prescribed standards) is punishable by a fine, a maximum imprisonment of two years, or both.

-- Forced labor is punishable by a fine, two years imprisonment, or both.

-- Employment of a person under 15 years of age (unless as an

apprentice who is over 13 years of age) is punishable by a fine, two years imprisonment, or both.

(SBU) The Labor Relations Amendment Act does not specifically include provisions for criminal punishment of labor recruiters who engage in recruitment of laborers using knowingly fraudulent or deceptive offers; for employers or labor agents who confiscate workers' passports or travel documents, switch contracts without the worker's consent as a means to keep the worker in a state of service, or withhold payment of salaries as means of keeping the worker in a state of service. However, prosecutors may be able to use the fair labor standards provisions in the Labor Relations Amendment Act to pursue cases involving such activities.

(SBU) Zimbabwe does not have specific laws that criminalize the acts of labor recruiters who recruit laborers using knowingly fraudulent or deceptive offers or impose on recruited laborers inappropriately high or illegal fees or commissions that create a debt bondage condition for the laborer. The constitution and labor law, however, provide that no one may be held in slavery or servitude or be made to perform forced or compulsory labor. There have not been reports of convictions for labor trafficking offenses during the reporting period.

-- 25 D. (SBU) Rape and aggravated indecent assault are punishable by life imprisonment. Incarceration is mandatory for convictions for rape or forcible sexual assault, but there is no minimum penalty. The media frequently reports on rape cases and convictions. Sentences usually vary from four years to fifteen years, depending on the circumstances of the crime.

-- 25 E. (SBU) Police did not respond to inquiries regarding investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences of new cases or those trafficking investigations reported last year. Ministry of Justice officials reported that the cases included in last year's TIP report were not brought to trial.

(SBU) None of the investigations or cases reported in the 2008 TIP Report has come to completion. Resource constraints in public health facilities, the ZRP, and the judiciary remain a severe hindrance. In addition, few victims are willing to come forward and pursue prosecution against their traffickers. Police lack human, financial and other resources to conduct proper investigations. It is not unusual for a detainee to remain in remand custody for several years before his/her case is heard in court. In addition, only government hospitals can conduct rape examinations submissible as evidence in court. Severe economic hardships, lack of equipment, and strikes by medical workers closed public health facilities across the country at the end of 2008. The lack of public health facilities may have Qat the end of 2008. The lack of public health facilities may have prevented reports of rape and sexual assault.

-- 25 F. (SBU) The government does not provide its own specialized training on trafficking; however, government officials attended 13 IOM training workshops that focused on trafficking and how to recognize trafficking victims during the reporting period. There were four training sessions specifically for law enforcement, including ZRP, VFU, magistrates, prosecutors, and immigration. There were three sessions specifically for health and social welfare workers, including officials from Ministry of Health and Child Welfare and Department of Social Welfare. An additional three sessions were held for faith-based organizations, including those that run shelters for children that may have been trafficked. IOM also conducted three training sessions for local law enforcement and health and social welfare workers in several areas known to be problem trafficking areas. The sub-regional Interpol office also organized one training session for 24 Zimbabwean police officers.

-- 25 G. (SBU) The government does cooperate with other governments in the investigation and prosecution of cases. However, during the reporting period, Interpol reported there were no international investigations or prosecutions brought forth by the Zimbabwean government.

-- 25 H. (SBU) The Zimbabwe Extradition Act permits the extradition of nationals, and the government has extradition treaties with countries in the region. There have not been reports of trafficking-related extraditions or requests of extradition from Zimbabwe to other countries during the reporting period.

-- 25 I. (SBU) There was no evidence of government involvement in or tolerance of trafficking, on a local or institutional level.

-- 25 J. (SBU) Not applicable per response to question I above.

-- 25 K. (SBU) Prostitution and the activities of brothel owner/operator, clients, pimps, and enforcers are criminalized (as defined in the Criminal Law Act.) During the year, there have been media reports regarding efforts by police to halt prostitution throughout the country. Police arrested both prostitutes and clients.

-- 25 L. (SBU) There have not been reported cases involving Zimbabwean nationals deployed abroad as part of a peacekeeping or other similar mission who engaged in or facilitated severe forms of trafficking or who exploited trafficking victims.

-- 25 M. (SBU) The country is not identified as a source or destination for child sex tourism. The country's sexual crimes laws do have extraterritorial coverage. There are no reports of any prosecutions or convictions under the extraterritorial provisions.

PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS

-- 26 A. (SBU) Foreign victims of trafficking can receive relief from deportation while receiving victim support services and while their cases are being investigated. The Chief of Immigration may offer a temporary employment permit at his discretion.

-- 26 B. (SBU) Zimbabwe does have victim care facilities which are accessible to trafficking victims, including foreign victims. IOM is the lead organization in addressing human trafficking, and the government has supported its activities. IOM trained a number of social services providers and NGOs to enable them to provide assistance to victims of trafficking in form of safe shelter, psychosocial support, family tracing, and reunification. IOM also continued to capacitate a number of NGOs and service providers to mainstream human trafficking activities in their already existing programs.

(SBU) The Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children is the national umbrella organization that oversees and maintains standards of over 70 institutions for children in Zimbabwe, including 20 in Harare; however, the country does not have specialized facilities dedicated to helping victims of trafficking. IOM, Girl Child Network, Oasis Trust, Musasa Project, and Save the Children Norway have developed specialized services to assist trafficking victims in their shelters/assistance programs. These services include shelter, medical and psychological assistance, reintegration and livelihood activities, and legal counseling. Funding for these services/programs comes from international donors. A number of children's homes and shelters were upgraded in Harare and Chiredzi for them to be able to provide assistance to child victims of trafficking: Musasa Project, Harare Children's Home, St. Joseph's Hostel for Boys and Chingele Children's Home. The government primarily depends on NGOs and IOs to provide trafficking victims these services. Organizations could not provide specific information on the amount spent specifically for victims of trafficking.

-- 26 C. (SBU) The government does not have the resources to provide funding to foreign or domestic NGOs for trafficking victim services. However, the government routinely refers potential victims to NGOs and IOs for assistance. In April 2008, the IOM opened a reception center on government-allocated land for Zimbabweans deported from Botswana to Plumtree, Zimbabwe. This second reception center in Zimbabwe helped identify additional trafficking victims. Between June and December 2008, IOM assisted 766 unaccompanied minors at Plumtree and 2,807 unaccompanied minors at Beitbridge in 2008.

-- 26 D. (SBU) The government assists and provides relief to foreign trafficking victims. For example, the government has assisted a child who authorities believe was trafficked from Mozambique in

¶2006. The Department of Immigration requires all deportees received from South Africa and Botswana to attend an IOM briefing on safe migration, which includes a discussion of trafficking. The ZRP, Department of Social Welfare and Department of Immigration do have a mechanism for referring victims of trafficking to victim support; however, at this time the government primarily depends on NGOs and IOs working with vulnerable populations and victims to identify trafficking victims and alert authorities.

-- 26 E. (SBU) Government-run shelters for children may assist victims through provision of longer-term shelter. Most assistance, however, is provided through NGOs or church-based organizations.

-- 26 F. (SBU) The Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare directly operates programs in three districts to provide orphans and vulnerable children with basic food assistance, support for school fees, counseling for victimized children, HIV/AIDS education, and medical assistance. The government also manages a small number of children's homes for vulnerable and orphaned children. However, all such government services are overwhelmed and under-funded. The government primarily depends on NGOs and IOs to provide shelter services. Several NGOs, including Child Protection Services, Girl Child Network, and Save the Children Norway, also manage children's shelters. IOM, Musasa Project, and Oasis Trust offer shelter services and support to adult trafficking victims. In most cases, the shelter, health care, counseling, and reintegration services are paid for by the NGOs and IOs.

(SBU) The Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare and UNICEF have agreements with 21 NGOs to advance the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), designed to ensure that orphans and vulnerable children are able to access education, food, health services, and birth registrations and were protected from abuse and exploitation. During the reporting period, UNICEF reported that the NGOs involved in the program had reached 100,000 OVC with comprehensive support and protection. Additionally, the Department of Social Welfare (under the Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare) works closely with IOM and Save the Children Norway to provide protection for children deported from South Africa received at the IOM Reception Center in Beitbridge, Zimbabwe. IOM anticipates that the new reception center in Plumtree, Zimbabwe will offer similar services. Additionally, the district council of Beitbridge has a dedicated child protection officer and convenes a child protection committee.

(SBU) The government has a referral process for victims that are identified at IOM's transit centers in Beitbridge and Plumtree. At the centers, IOM-trained Ministry of Social Welfare staff identify victims and refer them to safe houses where short, medium, and long-term assistance can be provided.

-- 26 G. (SBU) During the reporting period, IOM assisted nine victims. Three were referred by the Victim Friendly Unit of the Zimbabwe Republic Police and none were referred by the Department of Social Welfare. One NGO that assists young women reported assisting 45 girls who were victims of internal trafficking during the reporting period. Due to the government's lack of capacity and resources, all victims were assisted by non-governmental organizations.

-- 26 H. (SBU) The government's law enforcement, immigration, and social services do not have a formal system for proactively identifying victims of trafficking among high-risk persons with whom they may come in contact. Interpol and IOM-sponsored training programs have educated a limited number of government officials to better identify potential victims.

-- 26 I. (SBU) The rights of trafficking victims are respected. Once identified as a trafficking victim, the government usually referred the victim to an NGO or IO for assistance in an expeditious manner.

-- 26 J. (SBU) The government encourages victims to assist in the investigation and prosecution of traffickers; however, the lack of resources impedes the ability of the police to pursue many cases. The four victims identified during the reporting period are cooperating with the investigations. Victims may file a civil suit

or seek legal action against traffickers. The Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act provides for victim restitution and compensation. The law does not preclude witnesses or victims in a court case against a former employer from seeking other employment or leaving the country.

-- 26 K. (SBU) The government does not provide its own specialized training on trafficking; however, government officials attended 10 IOM training workshops that focused on trafficking and how to recognize trafficking victims during the reporting period. The Zimbabwean embassy in China was involved in monitoring a reported case of Zimbabweans who were trafficked to China. The Interpol NCB Zimbabwe office, the Department of Immigration and the Department of Social Welfare were in contact with South African authorities to coordinate victim assistance and investigations in ongoing cases during the reporting period.

-- 26 L. (SBU) The government primarily relies on IOM and other NGOs and IOs to provide assistance, such as medical aid, shelter or financial help, to its nationals who are repatriated as victims of trafficking.

-- 26 M. (SBU) IOM, UNICEF, Save the Children Norway, and Save the Children UK work with a network of local NGOs to support trafficking victims. The government has seen IOM as the leading organization in addressing human trafficking and has supported all activities undertaken by IOM including training of law enforcement and social service providers, as well as the recently launched national toll-free hotline for counter-trafficking funded by IOM. IOM and the NGO Oasis Trust launched the hotline in December 2008 for trafficking victims and for people to report suspected cases of trafficking. The hotline worked successfully for three weeks but then became non-functional when the telephone line stopped working. As of mid-February it remains out of service.

(SBU) NGOs that provide assistance to victims include Connect (training for counselors of abuse victims), Corridors of Hope (HIV/AIDS education and counseling), Childline (children's crisis hotline), Streets Ahead (counseling and shelter for children), Girl Child Network (shelter, skills building, and counseling for abused and trafficked girls), Oasis Trust and Musasa Project (shelter and counseling for domestic abuse and trafficking victims), and The Center (counseling for HIV/AIDS patients.) These groups reported that they generally received good cooperation from local authorities, but that the level of cooperation often depended on the location. In some areas, officials were difficult to work with because they did not understand trafficking or denied any problem existed. In other areas, officials were very cooperative and eager to receive training and other assistance in building capacity. In cases involving children, the Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Health and Children and local child protection committees were involved in placing the child with family or finding a suitable solution. The government generally ensured that victims received adequate care from service providers.

PREVENTION

-- 27 A. (SBU) The government did not conduct anti-trafficking information or education campaigns during the reporting periods. All anti-trafficking campaigns were conducted by IOM. The state-run media continues to print and air messages about the dangers of illegal migration and that warn the public about false employment scams, underage and forced marriages, prostitution and exploitative labor conditions. During the year, an IOM anti-trafficking radio campaign aired in five languages on all four government-controlled radio stations, which broadcast the public service announcement eight times per day during the peak migration periods. The government radio stations are a primary source of information throughout the country, especially in the rural areas. These awareness materials and radio spots include government and IOM contact details for victims to call for assistance or information.

-- 27 B. (SBU) The Department of Immigration does not currently have the ability to systematically monitor the growing number of illegal

migrants deported from South Africa, Botswana, and Zambia to effectively identify emerging trafficking patterns. Immigration officials do screen for potential victims; however, the government primarily depends on IOM protection officers and in-take procedures to identify victims.

-- 27 C. (SBU) The government has an inter-ministerial taskforce on trafficking made up of senior government officials that was established in April 2006; however, it still lacks a multi-agency operational working group that can effectively combat the trafficking problem in practice. The head of the inter-ministerial taskforce is a senior official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The taskforce's goals include: (1) criminalizing human trafficking through enactment of legislation, (2) information dissemination on the dangers of trafficking, (3) creating a center to specifically deal with trafficked persons and assist those seeking advice, (4) intercepting traffickers by monitoring print and electronic media for possible trafficking schemes, and (5) training anti-trafficking experts at all formal entry and exit points into the country. The taskforce has not achieved any of its goals. In terms of specific cases, the Interpol NCB Zimbabwe office is the point of contact for cases requiring international cooperation, and the VFU of the ZRP serves as the lead for cases of involving internal trafficking. The government does have a public corruption commission, but it is under-funded, politicized, and has yet to register any notable accomplishments.

-- 27 D. (SBU) The government does not have a national plan of action to address trafficking in persons. IOM continues to organize all NGOs and IOs that work on trafficking to complete a resource and gap assessment exercise before approaching the government to form a stakeholders working group.

(SBU) The government generally has a good working relationship with international organizations and NGOs on trafficking-related issues. There were some delays in receiving permission/permits to conduct trafficking-related studies/activities, but these activities were ultimately allowed to proceed. Unlike in previous years, there have not been reports of government harassment of NGOs working on the trafficking issue.

-- 27 E. (SBU) During the reporting period, the government did not take any specific steps to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts. Anecdotal reports indicated that a worsening economy reduced the demand for commercial sex acts.

-- 27 F. (SBU) During the reporting period, the government did not take any steps towards reducing the participation in international child sex tourism by its nationals. Post is unaware of any cases of international child sex tourism involving Zimbabweans.

-- 27 G. (SBU) An assessment of Zimbabwe's efforts to ensure that its troops deployed abroad for international peacekeeping missions do not engage in or facilitate trafficking or exploited trafficking victims was unavailable for this reporting period.

CONTACT INFORMATION

¶2. (U) Post point of contact for trafficking in persons is Amanda E. Porter; office phone 263-4-250-593, extension 4530; fax 263-4-253-000; e-mail Portera@state.gov. The estimated hours spent per officer in preparation of this report are as follows: PolOff 50 hours, PolChief 1 hour review, DCM 1 hour review, AMB 1 hour review.

MCGEE